

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS, COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS
IN ASCENDING ORDER WITH STATUS INDICATOR

Please cancel claims 8 and 19-21 without prejudice or disclaimer to their underlying subject matter.

Please amend the following claims as indicated.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder, comprising the steps of:

(a) mixing an aqueous ammonium tungstate solution with a carbon powder in a proportion to reduce and carburize ammonium tungstate to form a slurry,

(b) drying the slurry to prepare a precursor,

(c) subjecting the precursor to a reduction and carburization by heating to a temperature, at which a reduction and carburization proceeds, in a non-oxidizing gas atmosphere to form a reduced and carburized product,

(d) mixing the reduced and carburized product with a carbon powder in a proportion required to carburize a W_2C component and/or a W component in the reduced and carburized product into WC, and

(e) subjecting the reduced and carburized product mixed with the carbon powder to a carburization by heating to a temperature, at which a carburization proceeds, in a hydrogen atmosphere,

wherein an amount of the carbon (C) powder in step (a) with respect to the tungsten (W) component in ammonium tungstate by atomic ratio C/W is within a range of 3-

4.

2. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the ammonium tungstate in step (a) is at least one of

ammonium metatungstate and ammonium paratungstate.

3. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the ammonium tungstate in step (a) comprises a purity of at least 99.9% by weight based on the content of tungsten in the total metal component of said solution.

4. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 3, wherein the ammonium tungstate in step (a) comprises a purity of at least 99.99% by weight based on the content of tungsten in the total metal component of said solution.

5. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein a concentration of the aqueous ammonium tungstate solution in step (a) is within a range of 20-70% by weight.

6. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein each carbon powder in step (a) and step (d) is a carbon black powder having a purity of at least 99.9% by weight.

7. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 6, wherein each carbon powder in step (a) and step (d) is a carbon black powder having a purity of at least 99.99% by weight.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the slurry in step (b) is dried at a drying temperature of not more than 350°C.

10. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the non-oxidizing gas atmosphere of the reduction and carburization in step (c) is a mixed gas which substantially comprises a nitrogen gas at normal pressure and a CO gas, said CO gas being produced by the reduction and carburization of the precursor.

11. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of the reduction and carburization in step (c) is within a range of 900-1600°C.

12. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 11, wherein the temperature of the reduction and carburization in step (c) is within a range of 1000-1200°C.

13. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of the carburization in step (e) is within a range of 900-1600°C.

14. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a tungsten carbide powder according to claim 13, wherein the temperature of the carburization in step (e) is within a

range of 1000-1400°C.

15. (Previously Presented) A tungsten carbide powder comprising (a) an average particle size as measured by the Fischer Subsieve Sizer process of 0.8 μm or less, (b) a maximum particle size in a particle size distribution as measured in accordance with ASTM B430-79 of 1 μm or less, (c) the content of tungsten based on the component excluding a non-metal component being at least 99.9% by weight, (d) the content of nitrogen and that of oxygen in crystal lattices being respectively within a range of 0.08-0.20% by weight and 0.10-0.35% by weight and (e) a lattice constant of an a-axis and that of a b-axis being respectively within a range of 0.29020-0.29060 nm and 0.28380-0.28420 nm.

16. (Canceled).

17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously Presented) A tungsten carbide powder produced by the process according to claim 1.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Canceled).

21. (Canceled).